

What to bring to a shelter

STAFF REPORT

The Red Cross runs public shelters, but medical care will not be available. Shelters have food, but if you have special diet needs or want snacks, bring your own. You can't take guns or alcohol to shelters, but here is what you should bring:

- Three-day supply of water per person
- Flashlight, extra batteries
- Cellphone, with a battery-operated charger
- Radio with extra batteries
- Medicines
- Snacks
- Special-diet foods
- Baby food and diapers
- Pillows, blankets, cots, sleeping bags
- Comfortable clothing (two changes)
- Identification
- Photocopies of valuable documents
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures
- Toiletries, first-aid kit
- Cash
- Service animals
- Games, books or playing cards



RICARDO RAMIREZ BUXEDA/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Volunteers offload cots from the Red Cross to open a shelter in Central Florida for evacuees from Hurricane Irma in 2017. Make a list of necessary items to bring along.

Pack first-aid kit

Stock your first-aid kit and store in waterproof container:

- First-aid manual.
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes.
- Sterile gauze pads and roller bandages in a variety of sizes.
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape.
- Scissors and tweezers.
- Needle, for sewing and removing splinters.
- Bars of soap in their own plastic bags or waterproof containers.
- Moist towelettes.
- Antiseptic spray.
- Hydrogen peroxide.
- Rubbing alcohol.
- Iodine.
- Thermometer.
- Petroleum jelly to relieve itching.
- Ointments for burns and cuts.
- Latex gloves.
- Aspirin, acetaminophen and antacid tablets.
- Ointments for babies' teething

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Assist meteorologists by recording rainfall data

BY KRISTIN GIANNAS

With just two measurements, taken at the same time every morning, retired Disney executive Ben May is providing meteorologists with valuable data for the 2019 hurricane season from his Windermere backyard.

"They give you this big tube, and inside that one is a slender one," May said, describing the standard 4-inch cylinder rain gauge he keeps on his property.

May is part of a team of area volunteers who record rainfall data for the National Weather Service, which is used to evaluate flooding potential ahead of storms.

But there is a significant shortage of rainfall data in Central Florida, with the majority of the 200 active observers along the East Coast, according to NWS Meteorologist Jessie Smith. "We have community growth. We have a lot of new neighborhoods being developed, areas that used to be just farmland, or swamp, so we need additional support from these areas," Smith said.

Smith is hoping more volunteers will sign up in Orlando and Kissimmee specifically.

"Having an additional network of rainfall observers really gives us a good perspective of land-use area, and how flooding can affect these new communities, especially in the



Giannas

ever-growing Orlando area," Smith said.

Volunteers register online, with the "Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network" or "CoCo-RaHS."

The nonprofit organization, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA) measures and maps precipitation (rain, hail and snow) across the country, sharing data with the National Weather Service, hydrologists, emergency managers and many other groups.

"I can't stress enough how crucial it would be to have additional observers ahead of hurricane season," Smith said. "That way when we do have the next storm approaching, we have this network of observers we know that we can rely on, to use the data for our rainfall forecast and flood operations."

The daily observation from May's backyard helps fill a piece of the weather puzzle, a small contribution that helps forecasters.

"Like water in a bathtub, the atmosphere is a big thing of waves — always moving, you can't grab it, it doesn't stop" May said.

"The more data you have, the more people you have on the ground to help meteorologists predict the weather, the better."

Kristin Giannas is a Fox 35 meteorologist.